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ABSTRACT

The patterns of development of mass higher education in France and Belgium are compared. Student enrollment data, governmental measures taken to meet needs, and effects of the action within higher education are examined. Results of mass higher education in terms of its principal expectations and future prospects are also analyzed. France and Belgium are eighth and ninth respectively in the rate of increase in higher education from 1951 to 1965. In France the transition to mass higher education has led to a complete restructuring of the predominant sector of higher education, and the process is even now incomplete. Belgium has made this transition without significant alterations in the basic structure of its institutions. The cases of the two countries offer some suggestive material about the social consequences of different forms of system organizational structure in higher education. (SW)

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TWO PATHS TO MASS HIGHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND OUTCOMES IN BELGIUM AND FRANCE

by

Roger L. Geiger*

YALE HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUP
WORKING PAPER

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I. The Transition to Mass Higher Education: a Schema[1*]

The change from elite to mass higher education was a prolonged and often painful process that occurred throughout Western Europe during the decade of the 1960s. For theoretical purposes the point of transition is generally assumed to be when 15% of the relevant age group became enrolled in some form of higher education. At this level of participation, Martin Trow has written, quantitative growth requires major qualitative changes within the system as a whole. No longer is it sufficient merely to extend existing elite institutions, but rather there is increasing pressure to develop a differentiated structure that can accommodate greater varieties of students, more diversified curricula and a broader range of social purposes (Trow, 1973).

This appealing paradigm, however, conceals a number of pitfalls.[2] There is an obvious definitional problem surrounding the key figure of 15%: that ratio depends upon who is being compared to whom. How you count can make a difference of as much as a decade in the location of the critical transitional point. Nor can this simple pattern encompass many of the unique national adaptations to the challenge of mass higher education. Each country's response was dependent upon their existing structure of higher education as well as the political feasibility of reform. Sweden, for example, was able to completely overhaul its structure of advanced education to make it suitable for what the Swedes perceived to be the needs of a mass clientele; but Italy has been unable to do more than enroll ever-growing numbers of students in its traditional universities. In every country the unprecedented growth in student enrollments intruded higher

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* Footnotes begin on page 42.

education onto the political agenda more prominently than ever before. In 1968 both France and Belgium weathered their most severe political crises of the last twenty years, crises which in both cases centered on higher education. Thus, it was largely the interaction of politics and structure that determined the formal changes in higher education during these years.

The great expansion of higher education was nowhere planned, or even fully anticipated. It sprang from individual desire for social betterment which was itself the product of profound and remote social forces. World War II undoubtedly played a role in loosening the cake of custom that had traditionally limited the expectations of a substantial portion of the population. The economic boom of the fifties and sixties stimulated the demand for education in a number of ways. Increased personal wealth translated rather directly into higher parental ambitions for their children's education. Economic growth produced more positions in industry for highly trained personnel. But, more importantly for the educational system, the increase in social wealth spun off by industrial development led to substantial expansion in the education-intensive service sector. The growing demand for university graduates thus encouraged an increasing number of students to attend, and apparently exorcised once and for all the spectre of "intellectual unemployment" that had haunted Europe in the 1930s. From the standpoint of higher education the most important growth industry was education itself. And, in the end it was the vast extension of secondary education that was the most immediate source of the "masses" for higher education.

Most European nations entered the post-war era still maintaining educational systems that were rigidly segregated between a large, self-contained primary sector and an academic secondary sector, the latter admitting only

a minority of pupils and then rigorously selecting them over six or seven years. Such a system effectively sorted students into educational tracks with corresponding occupational destinies before they ever reached the university. The university was free to concentrate upon its paramount purpose of human capital formation--providing the relatively few who achieved secondary school-leaving certificates with the knowledge necessary for the exercise of a profession. During the last three decades successive reforms have been enacted to reduce and eliminate the barriers within the educational systems. The results, which were evident as early as the 1950s, produced a greatly increased number of students in academic secondary tracks, an attenuation of selectivity in those tracks, and the acceptance of other credentials for admission to post-secondary education. A far greater proportion of each age cohort consequently began to complete secondary schooling and follow the natural course to higher education. This imposed a new burden upon the post-secondary system and added some complications to its traditional function. A substantial amount of sorting now had to be done within higher education, thus giving the system an important responsibility in the determination of life chances, as well as a conspicuous place in social policy. Who enrolled in post-secondary education, which institutions they attended and how they fared there became matters affecting significant portions of the population. At a slightly later point in time it became apparent that there were inherent limitations upon the size of the traditional professions. Universities would have to provide training in a wider range of professions if they were to offer marketable skills to the growing number of enrollees. These two functions--sorting and human capital formation--were the focus of much of the rhetoric accompanying the growth of higher education.

Although the initial growth was unplanned, as soon as it was underway it required governmental actions in the form of legislative changes and commitment of resources. Such actions were supported by diverse proponents of educational expansion: industrialists, government functionaries, scientists, educational interest groups, and somewhat more indirectly OECD. These groups championed their cause with two principle lines of argument, both exceedingly compelling for a time. The first was a social justice argument: removing artificial barriers in the educational system would create for the first time true equality of educational opportunity. This in turn would lead to the democratization of both higher education and the preferred occupations for which it provided preparation. The second argument centered upon economic development. Reasoning from the social return from the creation of human capital, it depicted higher education as a productive investment which would contribute directly to economic growth. The emphasis was often placed on technological advancement and the need for a workforce which could adapt to changing conditions, but explicitly or implicitly the example of the United States came to mind with the most highly educated and most productive labor force in the world. Together these arguments can best be described as the ideology of mass higher education; that is, they supplied the expectations and justifications, with considerable faith and a host of unexamined assumptions, to support the expansion of higher education. They were not specific policy goals: they were more akin to rationalizations for a policy of accommodating the burgeoning individual demand for higher education.

This schematic depiction of the coming of mass higher education in Europe has been intended to highlight and place in context the problems that will be addressed in the remainder of this paper. First, there is an

obvious need for an unambiguous quantitative history of student enrollments during this period. Against this backdrop then, it will be possible to analyse over time the governmental measures taken to meet this challenge and the effects that these actions have had within higher education. It should then be possible to evaluate in at least a preliminary way the results of mass higher education in terms of its principal expectations. Finally, the consideration of this evolution should give some indication of the likely futures of these systems.

The two countries that have been selected for this comparison, France and Belgium, at first glance seem to show similar patterns of development. OECD figures, for example, show them to be eighth and ninth respectively (out of 23 nations) in the rate of increase in higher education from 1950 to 1965. Comparative figures on the rates of participation similarly show France to be only barely ahead of Belgium throughout this period (OECD, 1971a, pp. 22 & 81). However, in a more fundamental way they offer an intriguing contrast. In France the transition to mass higher education has led to a complete restructuring of the predominant sector of higher education--a process which is even now incomplete; Belgium, however, has made this transition without significant alterations in the basic structure of its institutions. In juxtaposition, then, they offer some suggestive material about the social consequences of different forms of system organizational structure in higher education.

II. Politics and Structure: France

The explosion of enrollments in French higher education did not occur until the 1960s. The decade of the fifties registered a moderate total growth of about 50%, but beginning in 1961 annual university enrollments began to grow at roughly triple the previous rate. By the end of the decade the universities contained three times more students than they had at the start. Initially the source of this growth was simply burgeoning individual demand, since the size of the university-age population was actually depressed during the first half of the 1960s. Beginning in 1966, however, substantially larger age cohorts arrived to sustain the extraordinary growth. Ultimately, of course, this heightened individual demand arose from decisions for more ambitious educational aspirations that were taken during the 1950s within secondary education. From 1960 on an ever-increasing number of students passed the once formidable baccalauréat; and, since more than 80% of new bacheliers usually continued their education, these increases were passed along rather directly to higher education. (See Statistical Appendix at end.)

Given the existing structure of French higher education it was inevitable that the bulk of this flow of students would find its way to the university faculties. The single real alternative--the path to the grandes écoles--was in fact open to few. To get into the better écoles aspirants had to prepare for the competitive entrance examinations in the intensive classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles located in the lycées. This track was consequently long, costly and, since more than 90% of these students studied a rigorous mathematical curriculum, restricted to those with superior mathematical ability. It is hardly surprising, then, that the classes préparatoires expanded only moderately during the 1960s, approximately 50%, and that their numbers remained in proportion with the engineering schools which they

largely served. The remaining post-secondary alternatives in France are the sections de techniciens supérieurs attached to technical secondary schools and the normal schools for primary teachers. The STS held little attraction for bacheliers, and teacher-training programs included comparatively few lycée graduates among their heterogeneous clientele. Both these types of education might be said to have been promoted into the universe of post-secondary education. Such a redefinition of an existing sector is one aspect of the transition to mass higher education. However, until recently in France these programs were not attractive to bacheliers. As a result it was the faculties which had to bear the immediate burden of providing for the "masses" as they graduated from the lycées.

The initial reactions to the growth of student numbers in France, as in Belgium, were determined by traditional conceptions of the university. The Fifth Republic basically accepted the social and economic justifications for expanding higher education, and consequently diverted mounting resources to this end. In only four years (1962-65) new universities were opened in Nantes, Rennes, Amiens, Rouen, Limoges and Nice; a variety of less comprehensive institutions were created as well. Existing universities began sprouting new buildings to accommodate additional students and teachers. But, few were pleased merely by the replication of what was called disparagingly the Napoleonic University.

A thorough critique of the university had already been articulated in the 1950s by a small but distinguished group of scientists, industrialists and prominent figures from the realms of politics and higher education organized into the Association d'Etude pour l'Expansion de la Recherche scientifique (Bourricaud 1977; Drouard 1978). The basic positions of the Association were presented in two conferences held at Caen a decade apart, in 1956 and 1966.

Like the University reform movement of almost a century earlier their dominant concern was to enhance scientific research within the universities. A more effective research effort and considerably more scientific manpower were essential for France to keep pace with other advanced nations. The existing organization of French faculties, they argued, seriously inhibited this effort by maintaining insuperable barriers between subjects, preventing the institutionalization of new subjects and precluding interdisciplinary work. The remedy they favored included the creation of true, integrated universities, based upon departments and essentially governed by the professoriat according to strictly academic criteria. While such proposals had great merit from the perspective of the would-be reformers, it is difficult to see how they could be reconciled with the avowed goal of producing many more scientificallt trained workers, or, more urgently, with the avalanche of new enrollments then reaching the faculties. However, these well-meaning efforts merely exemplify how the traditional conception of a university primarily devoted to knowledge creation was dominant during the initial phase of expansion.

It took only a few years of rapid growth to stimulate a widespread concern over some of the immediate problems of the existing structure. First there was much apprehension because so many of the new students, perhaps for want of alternatives, found their way into the Faculties of Letters. Compared to 1960, 1966 found 90,000 additional students in the letters faculties, or 40% of the total growth of the University; the sciences faculties accounted for another 25% of this growth. Since teaching had been the chief vocation of graduates from both faculties, there was little doubt that imbalances would soon occur between the supply of graduates and demand in their intended profession. For most universitaires, mindful of preserving the traditional university, the obvious answer seemed to be some form of selection. This, of

course, was not a solution to the problem of enrollment growth, but its negation.[3] And, because it would deprive bacheliers of what they regarded as a constitutional right, selection was never politically feasible. Moreover, speculation about selection merely concealed the enormous winnowing that was actually taking place through attrition, in part because of the incompetence, disorganization and unsuitability of the existing curriculum and pedagogy. This problem centered on the "année propédeutique" -- a single year program that had been established as a bridge between the culture générale of the lycées and the rather specialized work required for a licence. In the early 1960s this "antechamber" of higher education was eliminating more than half of the students hoping to study in letters or sciences. Most of these unfortunates, in fact, were too demoralized even to present themselves for their examinations. Given the predominance of traditional views in the University, even this glaring evidence of organizational failure was viewed with equanimity. However, it could not be so regarded in the Rue de Grenelle: the University not only seemed to be denying higher education to a significant portion of the clientele demanding it, but was also failing to produce the experts desired for France's economic development. Here was a compelling impetus for change.

Christian Fouchet, whose unusually long tenure as Minister of Education (1962-67) coincided with this crisis, was at once both close to the reform coalition, committed to the irreversibility of educational expansion, and cognizant of the practical constraints to higher educational reform (Bourricaud 1977; Schriewer 1972, 397-467). The reforms associated with his name, implemented in 1966, undoubtedly owe something to each of these considerations. Partly to accommodate both the masses of students and the goal of training researchers the university offerings were divided into three cycles. The

first two-year cycle replaced the old année propédeutique and was consecrated by a diploma of university studies in letters, sciences, economics or law. The second cycle in letters and sciences was divided between a licence and a more advanced maîtrise (at which level the paths to teaching and research were separated). The third cycle, then, was reserved for advanced training in research. The other major innovation of the Fouchet reforms was the creation of the IUTs (Instituts universitaires de technologie) to provide short-cycle technical education as an alternative to the overcrowded faculties.

Considering the magnitude of the crisis facing French higher education the Fouchet reforms were rather minor adjustments that safely ignored the entrenched interests (cf. Fomerand 1975). Contemporaries derided them for being insufficient or illogical (Grignon & Passeron 1970; Schriewer 1972, 454-467); nor have later evaluations been more sympathetic (Bourricaud 1977; Drouard 1978). The extravagant claim that the IUTs would attract 25% of university enrollments quickly made the reformers appear ridiculous,[4] and the changes in the first two cycles, by heightening student insecurity, probably helped to bring on the "events of May" 1968. Yet, for the purpose of this analysis they remain quite significant. Formulated at the point in time when the baccalauréat rate was attaining 15% and the participation rate in higher education had just passed 15%, the Fouchet reforms manifest an unambiguous recognition that mass higher education requires diversification of institutional structure. So, although only a limited degree of diversification was established, the newly demarcated levels of instruction created the possibility for new bridges and the flexibility for introducing new programs. However, despite their considerable long-range significance, they did not solve the immediate crisis facing French universities. And the consequences were grave. Whereas in 1966 more than two years of discussion and planning lay behind the limited reforms

implemented by Fouchet, in 1968 a complete restructuring of the university had to be quickly devised under the pressure of events.

In retrospect the Loi d'Orientation so skillfully woven by Edgar Faure has been recognized as primarily a solution to a political crisis (Bourricaud 1977; Vedel 1978). Above all it was necessary to assure the rentrée by pacifying discontented elements in the University without also antagonizing still powerful vested interests. To accomplish this Faure and his associates borrowed heavily, but selectively, from the critique of the university offered by the reform coalition and their proposals for its renovation. Under the banner of "pluri-disciplinarity" the faculties and, it was hoped, the intellectual rigidities of the old regime were swept away, to be replaced by department-like Unités d'enseignement et de recherche (UERs). Under the long-sought principle of "autonomy" these UERs were variously assembled into self-governing universities with elected presidents. "Participation," an arrangement favored in some form by the reform coalition, students, assistants and President de Gaulle, would abolish the autocracy of superannuated professors and assure that the new institutions would be responsive and adaptable to evolving social needs.

Not the least of the accomplishments of the Loi d'Orientation was to preserve at least some of the sense of idealism of 1968 through the disorganized period of implementation (1969-71). A team of OECD examiners captured the expectations of the reform when they envisioned a system of autonomous, distinctive and competitive universities, each offering students, faculty and the local economy their special expertise in the areas they had chosen to emphasize (OECD 1971b, 81-85). In other words, the ultimate goal of the new organization was functional diversification which would leave each university with its distinctive research specialties and appropriate related curricula.

In theory this would reconcile the imperatives of research with the needs of mass higher education. In fact, once the new organizational charts were established almost nothing was done to remove the practical barriers blocking entrance to this promised land. The consequent result was instead a random diversification in which the new universities, constructed from different fragments of the old faculties, superficially bore small resemblance to one another. Internally, however, the curriculum was little changed. The Loi d'Orientation, then, did not resolve the crisis of mass higher education, although, like the Fouchet reforms, it undoubtedly made some of the problems more tractable. Thus, it was only after the reorganization had taken place (1971) that the real challenge of adaptation could be faced. Basically this involved establishing programs more likely to lead to productive employment and, secondly, gaining more control over the student flow.

Given the freedom and the mandate to teach new subjects the universities tended to respond with courses centering on Marxism, psychoanalysis or ecology--interesting, perhaps, and certainly fashionable, but just as academic as the offerings of the former faculties. Progress in creating vocationally oriented programs was much more grudging. By 1976 some 200 new second-cycle degree programs of this type had been established, but they enrolled only about 10,000 of the quarter million university students at this level (Le Monde de l'éducation Oct. 1976). Perhaps the most successful innovations of this type were the Maîtrises de sciences et techniques (MST), most but not all of which pertained to scientific subjects, and similar maîtrises in fields of administration. Such programs fulfill the hopes of the 1968 reform perfectly (Casadevall 1976). Nevertheless, there is an inherent difficulty in identifying material that will impart valuable occupational skills to a significant number of students and which is not already being taught (see below, p.38). The government, for its part, became impatient with the slow pace of this

development and resolved to force the issue. After some two years of unproductive negotiations the Secretary of State for Universities promulgated the second-cycle reform early in 1976. Its aim was to professionalize (i.e. vocationalize) all licence and maîtrise programs, making them at once sufficient for vocational preparation at their particular level and hence potentially terminal. The universities were to devise these programs themselves with the assistance of technical study groups, while final authorization of the programs would be given by the Secretary. The response was a university protest even more massive than 1968, but with practically no resonance in the rest of French society. After months of confrontation in the Spring of 1976 the government had to be content with only a symbolic victory: the second-cycle reform remained on the books, but its effect was mollified considerably by the government concession that no existing programs would be terminated due to the reform (Geiger, 1977a; 1977b).

The second-cycle reform also raised the vexing issue of imposing greater control over the flow of students. Since the 1960s there has been considerable support in government circles and among conservative academics for instituting some form of selection. The arrangements originally made for the IUTs, where students are admitted upon an evaluation of their dossiers, probably represents the type of selection favored in these circles. The opposition of the Left, in the name of those least represented in higher education, plus the misgivings of the bourgeoisie, who have benefited most from the privileges of the baccalauréat, have made overt forms of selection a political impossibility. The one exception has been the establishment of a severely selective examination after the first year of medical studies (1971) -- a measure virtually dictated by financial and pedagogical considerations. The strategy underlying the second-cycle reform was to "hold the front" at the licence by

giving the universities some measure of control over admissions to their professionalized maîtrise programs. But, by raising the spectre of selection this attempt only helped to galvanize opposition to the reform. The bulk of the university is thus left with the form of selection it has always relied upon -- attrition and elimination. And these are powerful indeed. Globally, roughly one-fourth of new students abandon their studies during the first year; of those that remain perhaps one-half will attain a second-cycle degree. Stated another way, the 61,231 university degrees awarded in 1976 (second-cycle plus medical) represented only 7.2% of the 22 year-olds in France, or 38% of those entering the university in 1972. In the light of these figures it would seem difficult to argue that the output of the universities should be restricted further. Rather, they indicate that the real problem is one of diversification and orientation.

Indeed this is the root problem of the French path to mass higher education, one that university reformers have been struggling with for the last decade and a half. During most of this period these efforts have been widely derided as insufficient, or indicted as part of a conspiracy to maintain existing class relations. Currently the profound demoralization pervading the university is laid to the failure of this endeavor. Yet, without dismissing the serious difficulties still impeding the adaptation of the French university to the conditions of mass higher education, it is still possible to identify the progress that has been made (cf. Fomerand 1977). New material has been introduced into the university curriculum and much traditional material has been adapted to possible practical applications. Under the former faculties such developments were both difficult and infrequent. There now exists great flexibility in the intensity with which a subject may be studied: two, three, four, five and six years of work are possible in most subjects,

with an official diploma or national degree awarded upon completion of each level. The ultimate effect of such variety is not yet entirely evident, but it is still possible to hope that an open market situation will evolve within the university as the value of certain tracks is recognized in the labor markets and by students. Also, pedagogical changes, particularly the establishment of "contrôle continue," now seem to give students a fairer chance of earning a degree.

The undeniable progress that has been achieved would still appear to most observers to fall short of a successful adaptation to the conditions of mass higher education. The dissatisfaction and resistance to change is inherent to the task that France has been forced to assume. It stems from the continuity of traditional assumptions about the importance of research, the nature of teaching, the role of professors and the preference for pure science. Many of these expectations were encouraged by the Loi d'Orientation due to the anterior work of the reform coalition. The French universities still retain a number of elite functions, yet, the evolution of the reformed universities has been above all constrained by the necessity of educating upwards of a fifth of the young people of France. That evolution is far from complete. In the near future it seems likely that this same constraint will push the multitude of universities and UERs to differentiate themselves further from their common ancestor, the Napoleonic University.

III. Politics and Structure: Belgium

The basic contours of enrollment growth in Belgian higher education are similar to those in France. The onset of rapid growth occurred in the early 1960s when the small birth cohorts of the war years were still part of the university-age population. The maturation of larger cohorts later in the decade then helped to keep the annual growth rate of total enrollments at about 10% from 1962 to 1968. Enrollment growth in France during these years was somewhat more frantic, but growth in Belgium for the following seven years was more sustained. From 1961-62 to 1975-76 both systems seem to show nearly identical degrees of growth. To account for the dynamics of enrollments in Belgium, however, it is necessary to follow the fluctuations of student numbers in normal schools, technical schools and university level institutions.

Primary school teacher education in Belgium has until recently been offered within secondary education, and consequently is not included in the Statistical Appendix (see note b). Nevertheless, it constituted an important part of the educational demand during the early stages of expansion. In 1963-64 the normal schools were training more teachers than there were students in the universities (36,800 of which 25,300 were primary/nursery level and 11,500 were middle school: Van de Vijvere 1977). From this point the normal schools declined while the universities consistently counted 5000 additional students per year through 1971. After this, however, the number of new entrants to the universities became constant, and the universities consequently registered only slight overall growth. Non-university technical education averaged some 3000 additional students per year from 1962 through to 1975, but this average conceals some significant irregularities. From 1965 to 1968, while normal school enrollments were dropping sharply (from

33,000 to 26,000) the technical schools gained nearly 15,000 students -- as many as the universities. But for the next three years, as the universities continued their steady expansion, technical education added only 4000 new enrollments. However, when the universities ceased to grow after 1971, the non-university schools resumed slightly more than their average magnitude of growth.

This pattern would seem to suggest that enrollment levels in each sector are loosely interdependent. The decline of the normal schools apparently bouyed enrollments in both the university and the technical sectors. (The universities probably benefited from a change in the law [1964] making all general secondary school graduates eligible for university study provided they passed a relatively mild "maturity" examination.) And, the stagnation of university entrants seemed to correspond with an enhanced attractiveness of the technical schools. This conclusion is somewhat surprising considering the large disparity between the level of work and the stature of degrees in the university and non-university sectors.

Technical higher education in Belgium has always been locally based and highly diverse; thus, often eluding simple generalizations (Geiger 1978). Basically it has been offered on two levels: a short course of two years leading to the title of gradué, and a three year program leading to the degree of "engineer-technician." Some of the schools are quite venerable for institutions of this type, like the Ecole Supérieure de Textiles at Verviers founded in 1894; but many are simply the prolongation of programs within the technical secondary schools. Expansion has proved relatively painless in this sector: the number of schools grew by two thirds in only a decade (1958-68) in response to demand. The strength of these schools has been their community base and their close ties with local industry. The consequence

of this organic development has been a good deal of disorder within the sector. Government attempts to rationalize technical higher education floundered until 1977, when under pressure from the E.E.C. a law was passed upgrading the engineer-technician to a four-year program conferring the degree of "industrial engineer."

Belgium was thus compelled to upgrade its vocational higher education while France was widely accused at the time of the second-cycle reform of devaluing its university programs in the name of vocationalism. The reasons for this discrepency are not hard to find. Whereas France introduced IUTs when its expansion was already in full swing, Belgium entered the 1960s with an established and well articulated system of short-cycle vocational higher education. The IUTs, although by no means total failures, were unable to relieve the enrollment pressure on the French universities; but in Belgium the burden of mass higher education was in large measure carried by the non-university sectors, and since the early sixties particularly by the technical schools. This latter conclusion is more evident from figures on new entrants than on total enrollments. During the 1960s the universities, because of their longer programs, contained around 58% of post-secondary enrollments, while some 62% of the new entrants were choosing the non-university sectors. In the present decade the relative weight of non-university enrollments seems to have increased: about 55% of total enrollments in the universities vs. 65% of new entrants in non-university institutions. The consequences of this pattern of development have been most significant for Belgian universities which have not had to make accommodations for the "masses." Presently they seem to be educating under 14% of the age group. Thus, the universities have been able to largely retain their traditional character. This outcome was not solely due to the existence of a robust

non-university sector, however; it also owed a great deal to the politics of university expansion.

Belgium entered the 1960s with four primary universities, plus a handful of lesser university-level institutions. The Flemish University of Ghent and the French University of Liège were both under the authority of the national government. The Catholic University of Louvain and the Free (as in free-thinking) University of Brussels were independent institutions offering instruction in both languages (Geiger 1978; Verhoeven 1979). The universities were thus divided according to the major cleavages of Belgian culture. Given the consociational nature of Belgian political life (Verhoeven 1979), benefits extended to one community generally have to be balanced with concessions to their counterparts--a process often involving laborious negotiations and not a little rancor. The compartmentalized structure of Belgian universities has linked them inextricably to these political processes.

During the first phase of university expansion in Belgium, as in France, it was simply a question of providing more places for university study. Competition between universities, however, made both a new university map and an altered formula for university finance contentious issues. Enlargement of the existing universities, the establishment of satellite campuses and new institutions for population centers lacking a university (namely Antwerp) were the alternatives advocated by different factions during the early 1960s. The Janne Law of 1965 offered something to everyone, but was particularly advantageous to the independent universities. Their government subsidization was substantially increased to cover their expansion, and they received permission to open satellite campuses as well. Antwerp was granted its own state university center, but the same privilege also had to be granted to the Walloon

city of Mons. Ghent and Liège by way of consolation were promised large budgetary increases for their own development (Geiger 1978; Verhoeven 1979).

The Janne Law was intended as a temporary measure fulfilling the nation's immediate needs until permanent arrangements for expanding and funding the university system could commence in 1969. Had this course actually been open to the Belgians consideration would probably have been given to adapting the universities to a larger clientele and a larger role. Instead, Belgium like France was overwhelmed by crisis in 1968, and the future structure of the university system was determined by the imperative of finding a resolution.

Throughout the 1960s the anomalous existence of a French community of students, teachers and other university personnel in the Flemish city of Leuven had been the source of overt and bitter conflict. When early in 1968 the French section of the university unilaterally announced expansion plans, the Flemings responded to this provocation by closing the university with a strike. This issue polarized the country to such an extent that the government fell on February 7, and new elections were required before a successor could be formed in the middle of June. The unequivocal basis of the new government was the expulsion of the French university from Leuven. The creation of what is now called "Louvain-la-neuve" could not be carried out in isolation from other university planning. Eventually it involved drawing another university map and reaching a new financial settlement.

Partly in response to the events in Leuven and partly in response to a student revolt, the Free University of Brussels also underwent a schism into independent French and Flemish universities. In 1969 the government lent identical sums to Brussels and the Catholic University of Louvain to purchase new campuses. Meanwhile, the claims of Antwerp and Mons for advanced university course work were recognized, thereby giving both cities, in effect, full

universities. Thus, by 1971 the number of Belgian universities had doubled from four to eight, and in addition some lesser university-level institutions were added. The "University Finance and Control Law" of 1971 put all these institutions on essentially the same financial footing, with their full operating budget provided by the national government according to student-based formulae.

This new regime in Belgian universities has brought with it some internal changes. The student revolts of 1968 led to the establishment of a small degree of participation in university governance, and the 1971 law, as its title indicates, instituted significant administrative constraints over the formally independent institutions. But unlike some other European nations, in academic matters the authority of the Belgian professors has remained supreme. They define what constitutes university-level work, and they continue to maintain relatively rigorous standards. The continuity of academic standards may have benefited from the political struggles surrounding university expansion. Conflict revolved around the placement of institutions, the mode of finance and, above all, the language question, but this left little opportunity to call into question the academic operations of the universities.

In other respects the results of Belgian university expansion may have been more negative. Since many of the conflicts were resolved by granting all competing claims, Belgian conflict resolution has proved to be inherently expensive. As a result Belgium had the highest growth rate in the unit costs of higher education during the 1960s among OECD countries (OECD 1974, p. 181). In fact, after the settlements of both 1965 and 1971 the government was forced to scale down its original commitments to the universities. However, the negative side of this bounty has come only recently in the form of

cost-conscious administrative controls imposed upon the universities (Geiger 1978). The predominance of political considerations in Belgian expansion has virtually precluded long or even medium range planning. It is a painful irony that the last spasm of expansion was arranged in 1971 -- precisely the year in which enrollments levelled off. It is quite doubtful that this situation could have been fully foreseen, but a rational, incremental approach to the problem would certainly have avoided the considerable over-capacity that has been created. However, even to consider this possibility is unrealistic. The enrollment stagnation that suddenly struck Belgian universities was not an avoidable accident, but rather an inherent consequence of their nature and their recent history.

The maintenance of rigorous academic standards in Belgian universities has had the effect of limiting university study to a relatively small portion of the population (see Geiger 1978). Access to the universities is quite open, the only requirement being the maturité exam which 86% of secondary school graduates are able to pass. The real hurdle is the set of examinations at the end of the first year (first candidature). Belgian students are required to master a heavy curriculum of some ten or more courses, and then to pass the year-end exams as a unit, or else repeat the entire year's work. Year in and year out only about half of the first year students succeed. Diligence is obviously important, but the most crucial factor in success seems to be a strong academic preparation in secondary school. Students from the Latin tracks, in particular, show significantly higher rates of success (Table 1). For students in the modern tracks (excepting Math-Modern Languages A), unless they possess exceptional ability, wagering a year's work in the first candidature presents rather poor odds. In recent years the growth in secondary school graduates has occurred in these modern programs,

TABLE 1 Success in First Candidature by Secondary School Program (Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1974-75)

University average pass rate: index = 100

Latin-Math	142
Latin-Science	115
Latin-Greek	111
Math-Modern Languages (A)	100
Science-Modern Languages (B)	83
Commercial	53
Human Sciences	36
Average for General Secondary Programs	102
Average for Technical Secondary Programs	55

Source: Bonte 1976.

* * * * * * *

TABLE 2 Secondary School Graduates by Program: 1969 & 1975

	1969		1975	
Latin-Greek	7611	16,552	4287	16,555
Latin-Math	2310		3031	
Latin-Science	2768		4427	
Math-Modern Languages (A)	3863		4810	
Science-Modern Languages (B)	4877	11,747	7662	18,996
Commercial	6870		7892	
Human Sciences	----		2487	
Renovated General Secondary	____		955	
Total General Secondary	28293		35551	
Total Technical Secondary	21046		18226	

Source: Annuaire Statistique de l'Enseignement, XIV (1969-70), Bureau de Statistiques Universitaires, Rapport Annuel, 1976.

and has thus not represented an increase in the number of students prepared for university study (Table 2). In 1971 the entrance rate to Belgian universities reached almost 11% of 18 year-olds, but since then it has not pushed beyond that level. This figure, then, would seem to represent a kind of natural limit of the system as it is presently constituted. Any number of changes could, of course, disrupt this equilibrium, but at the moment no decisive forces of change seem to be impinging upon the system. Belgian universities are thus likely to continue to be relatively elite institutions. Their output, however, would appear to be only slightly below the "mass" universities of France. In 1975 Belgian universities produced almost 10,000 graduates (licences, medical doctors and engineers), a figure representing 6.8% of 21 year-olds. Recall that the figure for France in 1976 was only 7.2%, not including an additional 1+ to 2% graduating from grandes écoles. If an estimate of the foreign graduates were removed from these totals the percentage of university-level graduates per cohort would roughly equal 6% for Belgium, vs. 8.5% for France. It now remains to be seen how these levels of output are related to the vexing issues of equity and efficiency in higher education.

IV. Democratization of Higher Education

During the expansion of higher education expectations of equalizing educational opportunity and democratizing higher education were widely evoked in official circles to justify the commitment of additional resources or to overcome the misgivings of traditionalists. Such pronouncements, whether by politicians, planners or educators, seldom received any precise formulation. It would consequently be pointless to hold such statements to account as policy objectives. It was widely believed that an untapped "pool of talent" existed within those classes which were underrepresented in higher education, and furthermore that it was vital to national interests to utilize this resource (Husén 1975, pp. 73-107). Common sense also seemed to indicate that encouraging overall expansion would bring in more students from the lower classes and produce a more balanced social representation. But above all, the notion that higher education and the careers to which it leads should be open to all citizens is an ideal inherent to contemporary democratic societies. For this reason during the initial phases of expansion this issue was characterized more by wishful thinking than by hard questioning. Certainly many of the assumptions underlying democratization would have required closer examination if the simple question had been posed: "who's next in line at the portals of higher education?"

By the end of the 1960s, if not sooner, the popular fiction that merely expanding higher education would result in democratization had been badly undermined by experience. The social composition of the "new" students proved to be scarcely different from that of the original university population. OECD examiners in France remarked,

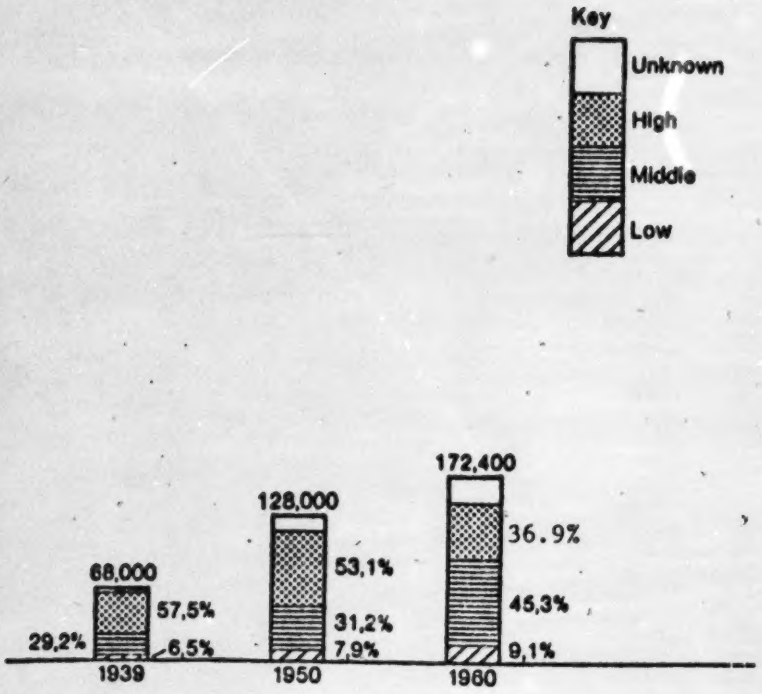
> one usually speaks of the "democratization" of higher education, although one should note that in France as in certain other

> European countries, it is especially the middle class [petite bourgeoisie] which is currently supplying the pressure, and not the urban working classes, nor the small farmers or agricultural workers. As the general level of prosperity rises, families situated just at the lower border of the upper-middle class [classe moyenne] (which was formerly the principal "client" of the universities) aspire to higher education as an instrument of social and economic promotion and personal fulfillment. (OECD 1971b, p. 72)

Interestingly, this statement accurately describes the evolution of the 1950s in French universities (see Figure I). During that decade Ministry of Education data show significant gains in participation registered by "employés" (from 12% to 19%) and "artisans et petits commerçants" (5% to 12%), while rather puzzling declines were apparently taking place among "professions libérales (17.4% to 12.5%) and "chefs d'entreprise" (15.4% to 5.7%). The decline among the latter clearly upper-middle class groups may owe partly to the ceiling effect and partly to the outmoded categorization employed (which was changed in 1961).

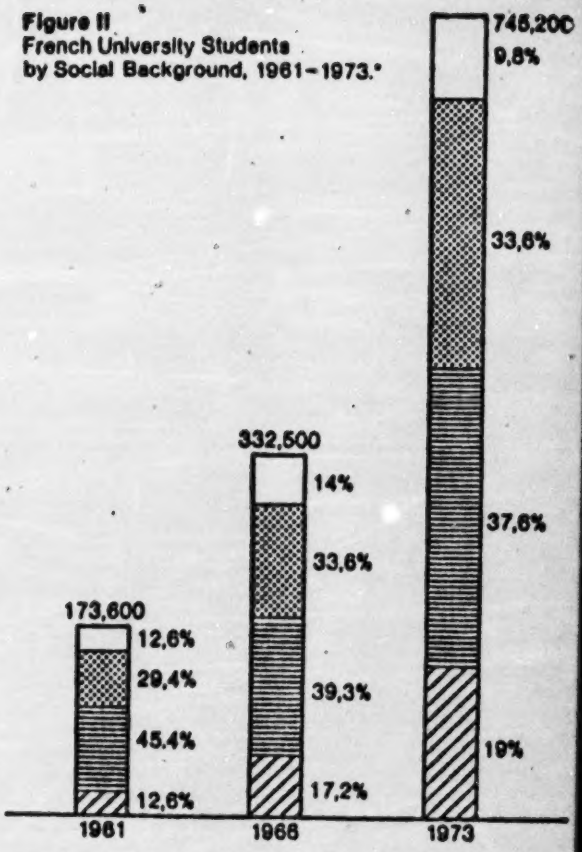
Since 1960 university expansion has been characterized by stability of social relations. The bar graphs in Figure II show that this has only been possible through a remarkably large absolute increase in students from the upper-middle class (professions libérales et cadres supérieures). The relative weights of socio-professional categories are brought into much clearer focus in Table 3. This data indicates that the enrollment explosion of the 1960s altered the social distribution of students only slightly. Workers almost doubled their relatively feeble share of enrollments, while the petite-bourgeois groups which had advanced during the 1960s now lost ground. The most favored groups actually increased their share of total

Figure I
French University Students by Social Background, 1939-1960.*



*Source: Adapted from "Informations Statistiques", "Ministère de l'Education Nationale."

Figure II
French University Students by Social Background, 1961-1973.*



*Source: Adapted from "Tableaux de l'Education Nationale." "Ministère de l'Education Nationale."

[from Geiger 1977a]

TABLE 3: Social Origins of French University Students (including IUTs), 1961-1976; and Distribution of Male Workforce, 1962 & 1968.

	% Students					% Male Workforce	
	1961	1968	1974	1975	1976	1962	1968
Agriculteurs	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.2	15.2	11.9
Salariés agricoles	0.6	.7	.7	.8	.6	6.0	4.1
Patrons industrie et commerce	20.8	16.1	13.2	13.0	12.6	10.7	9.9
Professions libérales et cadres supérieurs	11.9 21.7	36.1	36.2	36.4	36.8	5.3	6.3
Cadres moyens	21.5	18.2	18.0	18.2	18.8	7.5	9.3
Employés	9.6	9.7	10.4	10.2	10.3	8.1	9.1
Ouvriers	6.3	11.6	13.9	14.0	13.7	45.6	47.7
Personnel de service	1.0	.8	.9	.9	1.0	1.6	1.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

"Other categories" are not included in these percentages.

SOURCE: students: Ministère de l'Education, Statistiques des enseignements, tableaux et informations; workforce: Annuaire statistique de la France, 1973, p. 64.

enrollments, but only because of the growth in cadres superieures during this interval. Their index of over-representation actually declined from (33.6/5.3 =) 6.3 to (36.1/6.3 =) 5.7. From 1968 to 1976 university enrollments expanded by some 50%, but the social distribution hardly changed at all. The trends that do seem in evidence are, a stagnation in the level of worker representation; a continued downtrend for patrons corresponding to their decline in the workforce; and relative stability for cadres superieures despite a probable increase in the workforce. Nevertheless, the one overwhelming trend that demands explanation is the persistence of the social composition of the during a period when it effectively tripled in size.

Questions such as these involving the relationship between education and social stratification have given birth to a minor scholarly industry to which this paper could not begin to do justice. Conceptually one can readily distinguish a number of possible causes for the persistence of inequality. Academic ability might not be distributed equally across the social spectrum (cf. Eicher & Mingat 1975); economic and cultural disadvantages of a less-favored backgrdund can inhibit achievement and discourage pursuit of advanced schooling; and the institutional and intellectual content of education can exaggerate the impact of initial social differences (Bourdieu & Passeron 1964; 1970). Beyond these Raymond Boudon has proposed an explanation for inequality of educational opportunity emphasizing what he calls the secondary effects of social stratification. Starting from the fact that social aspirations tend to vary relative to social position, he posits that the parameters for educational decisions, other things being equal, will accordingly differ by social class (Boudon 1974). For students with lower social backgrounds each branching point in the educational system can pose difficult and nearly irreversible choices which do not exist for students whose educational destiny is unequivocally established. The cumulative effect of these differentials

through several points of decision can produce very large discrepencies in the participation rates of different social groups in higher education. A massive longitudinal study in France illustrates Boudon's point perfectly at the vital point of transition from baccalauréat to higher education (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Proportion of Offspring by Social Origins Attaining the Baccalauréat and Higher Education

	Bacheliers, 1969-1971 %	Students, 1971-1972, %	% par rapport aux bacheliers %
Total	21.5	17.1	80
Sans profession et divers	9.3	5.8	62
Salariés agricoles	9.5	6.1	64
Ouvriers	12.4	8.2	66
Cultivateurs	15.9	9.9	62
Artisans, commer ants	24.4	19.8	81
Employés	25.8	21.2	82
Cadres moyens	50.2	44.2	88
Professions libérales	51.9	52.2	(1)
Cadres supérieurs	57.4	56.9	99

Source: Girard & Bastide 1973.

Among farmers and workers only two-thirds of the bacheliers were continuing their studies; for the lower-middle class the proportion increased to four-fifths; but for managers and professionals continuation was automatic. Table 4 also demonstrates the considerable extent to which the educational fate of students is decided at the secondary level. Indeed, the lycées could provide the key to explaining the peculiar inequalities of French higher education during the 1950s and 1960s.

Simply put, the question is why the university expansion of the 1950s significantly augmented lower-middle-class representation, while that of the 1960s essentially perpetuated existing class relations. The first factor to consider is the impact of the secondary enrollment boom of the 1950s on the

character of the lycées. Secondary enrollments expanded only gradually after the War until 1953. That year marked the beginning of a decade of explosive growth that lifted enrollments by 150%. In the process the traditional lycées were overwhelmed (Prost 1968, pp. 433-62). An army of new teachers was recruited, many of necessity without sufficient qualifications, and even they were too few to keep classes from ballooning to 40 and 50 pupils. Academic standards could not help but suffer, and that eventually produced a growing number of bacheliers. But, who really benefited from the lowering of the time-honored barriére? During the initial phase of expansion, before the traditional practices of the lycées were swamped, a growing proportion of lower-middle-class students seem to have survived the lycées for largely meritocratic reasons. Recruitment apparently descended from the traditional clientele into adjacent social groups, much as the OECD report already cited (1971b) suggested, and there dipped into a true untapped pool of talent that subsequently continued on to the faculties. As standards fell, however, and progress through the system became easier for everyone, the action of Boudon's secondary effects of stratification became the predominant mechanism for assuring that a large proportion of highly motivated, socially privileged pupils would survive the course. This conclusion may appear somewhat paradoxical, and seems to contradict Boudon's own contention that inequality of educational opportunity ought to decrease over time (principally due to the ceiling effect). But, it is inherent to Boudon's model, and well documented as well, that aspiration to higher education is more unequally distributed among potential students than is subsequent attainment of higher education (cf. Boudon 1974, pp. 25-26). This is principally due to wide discrepencies by social class in the middle and lower levels of ability. Simplistically, one could therefore say that the fewer obstacles between aspiration and realization, the more unequal will be the result. Yet, this seems to be essentially

what occurred in France beginning in the late 1950s, and the result was the perpetuation of the principal social imbalances within the university population.[5]

Social origins data for Belgian universities is much scarcer, but what exists offers an interesting comparison with France (Table 5).

TABLE 5: Relative Representation of University Students by Social Origins, France and Belgium.

Index = 1 = 25.4 university students/1000 workers, France 1964
3.2 new university students/1000 workers, Belgium 1962
5. new university students/1000 workers, Belgium 1966

	FRANCE 1964	BELGIUM 1962	BELGIUM 1966
Liberal Professions	10.32	3.53	3.37
High-level employees (B. inc. industrialists)	4.35	3.41	3.55
Middle-level employees (F. inc. primary teachers)	2.46		
Teachers, primary & Secondary		3.25	3.43
Small Businessmen, Artisans (F. inc. industrialists)	1.50	1.28	1.14
Clerical, Sales, Service (F.)	0.97		
Qualified Clerical (B.)		1.44	1.72
Farmers	0.37	0.63	0.60
Workers + non-qualified clerical		0.375	0.372
Workers	0.19	0.247*	0.27*

* estimated

SOURCE: adapted from OECD 1970b.

The differences are rather striking: the offspring of the liberal professions are three times more over-represented in France, while workers' children are significantly more under-represented. When Belgium is compared to other OECD countries, only the United States and Norway show less inequality (Boudon 1964, p. 45; OECD 1970b). This is a most

surprising finding considering the traditional and elitist structure of the Belgian educational system. Boudon dismisses this evidence entirely, arguing that the Belgian data in Table 5 concerns only incoming students who will face a socially differential attrition during their studies (1974, p. 44). However, such an effect could never account for the magnitude of difference between France and Belgium. Furthermore, for purposes of comparison it should be noted that inclusion of social origins data from the elite grandes écoles in the French totals would further magnify the inequality of those figures, and hence the differences between the two countries (cf. Boudieu & Passeron 1964, pp. 19-20).

It is difficult to explain with any certitude the lower inequality of educational opportunity prevailing in Belgium. In the light of both the preceding discussion of France and earlier remarks about the strongly meritocratic nature of the Belgian system (pp. 22-24), one would suspect that academic selection was playing a prominent role in Beligan schools. There is at least circumstantial evidence to support this hypothesis. General secondary education expanded quite gradually during the 1950s and early 1960s (despite an acceleration of graduates at the end of this period). OECD figures reveal only a 27% increase from 1955 to 1965 (OECD 1970a). Thus, Belgian secondary schools were most likely spared the trauma experienced by the French lycées. The open competition between Church and public schools may be a factor in reinforcing academic quality. Finally, the so-called "school wars" that shook the country during the late 1950s must have indirectly encouraged the educational aspirations of the entire population as well as the academic competition between public and Church schools.

The number of general secondary school graduates began to expand rapidly in 1961. From 1960 to 1966 the number of graduates more than

doubled, while new university enrollees nearly doubled. In the comparison between relative social representation among new students given in Table 5, then, 1966 represents 57% more students than 1962. It is noteworthy that rapid expansion in Belgium seems to have had the same slightly regressive effects that were brought about in France. Those groups that could be expected to have the highest educational aspirations all increased their relative participation except for the liberal professions (although it would have taken only 100 additional students to bring that category into line). What is most remarkable, once again, is the stability of social relations in the university, even though in the Belgian case these inequalities were maintained at a relatively modest level.

Stepping back from the tables and statistics, several conclusions stand out for the balance sheet on democratization. First, the vast expansion of higher education during the last two decades brought the opportunity for economic, social and psychological rewards of advanced schooling to an unprecedented number of individuals. That this opportunity was sought disproportionately by those from favored social positions should in no way discredit this accomplishment. Efforts to induce greater participation from those in the lower half of the social spectrum, whether through financial aid to low-income students or by changes in lower school tracking, have failed to substantially alter deeply imbedded patterns of social and cultural behavior. It would seem that only limitations on the access of privileged groups would produce a more egalitarian profile for the university population. Where this has been tried, as in the Soviet bloc countries, the cure has generally proved to be more troublesome than the original problem. Secondly, given the readily ascertainable social character of this expansion, "democratization" was clearly the wrong label. If political and educational leaders used this term ingenuously, they were deceiving themselves; if used disingenuously, they

were deceiving the public. Thirdly, the notion that academic standards and democratization stand in inverse relationship to one another is certainly misleading and possibly dangerous. The French experience, and perhaps the Belgian as well, suggest that under certain circumstances rapid expansion and slipping standards redound to the advantage of relatively privileged social groups. It was largely their children, it turns out, who were waiting for the portals of higher education to open just a bit wider. Finally, one might ask what policies would be most conducive to true democratization? In the light of the widespread finding that most social mobility is short-distance mobility, this becomes a question of what educational structures could provide such opportunities in bulk for the lower classes. The obvious answer would seem to be short-cycle higher education. Such "less noble" tracks are often castigated as undemocratic, since they only promise access to middle-range occupations. The experience of Belgium contradicts this charge decisively. Their well-developed system of non-university higher education complements the elite university sector by accommodating technical secondary school graduates and university drop-outs alike. The universities, as has been seen, still show a better than average representation of the population. The ideal of democratization neither should nor could be abandoned in Western societies; however, a more modest and realistic interpretation of this goal might in the long run produce less hypocricy and better results.

V. The Economics of Higher Education

Determining the optimum level of social investment in higher education is a theoretical problem of great complexity in the discipline of economics. The actual amount invested in higher education, on the other hand, is a practical problem that governments face on a yearly basis. The state typically has limited discretionary control over this sum, at best being able to shade it in one direction or the other. However, the direction of change tends to be significant. It mirrors a more widespread perception of whether that optimum level of investment is being exceeded or undershot; and this perception is generally indicative of the broader public standing of higher education as a whole. It would seem to be an important fact, then, that throughout most of the 1960s both France and Belgium acted on the belief that they were underinvested in higher education, and that additional resources for this purpose would eventually produce an economic return; but that for most of this decade they have effectively reversed these assumptions. Both countries have been attempting to scale down university expenditures with somewhat differing justifications. The Belgians have stressed unsustainable overinvestment, while the French have more ominously charged that university study was in large measure unproductive. There is no prima facie reason why the assumptions of the 1960s and those of the 1970s cannot both be substantially correct. Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors that bear consideration.

The most immediate cause of the current pessimistic assessment of university education has been the employment crisis of university graduates. At one time most of those who earned a degree could expect secure, respectable, administered careers in teaching or the civil service. Such expectations have become considerably strained in the last five years in

Belgium, but the situation has been decidedly worse in France, where the deflation of such hopes was already an important source of student discontent in 1968 (Boudon 1969). Today the unemployment, or more likely the under-employment of graduates is an ubiquitous concern in French universities, due in no small measure to the avalanche of adverse publicity surrounding the struggle over the second-cycle reform of 1976. The onus for this situation has been, curiously enough, placed on the universities, which have been labeled "fabrique des chômeurs" (Geiger 1977b; 1979). No less a personage than the President of the Republic has declared that the unemployment of young people is essentially a problem of education: "whoever has a formation sérieuse is practically assured of finding some work" (Le Monde 2/4/77). The second-cycle reform, presented as an antidote to graduate unemployment, consecrated this view as official public policy. Yet, such a position actually blames the university for failing to make a rapid and far-reaching adjustment to conditions quite beyond its control.

The principal cause of youthful unemployment in France, Belgium and most Western countries is demographic rather than educational. There are simply too many young people at every level of educational attainment for the sluggish national economies of this decade to assimilate. The problem for university graduates has been exacerbated by specific weaknesses in the largest job categories. Teaching is the most obvious example, and there again much of the problem stems from demographic fluctuations; but elsewhere recession-induced austerity and the legacy of recent over-recruitment serve as a continual restraint upon demand (cf. Boudon 1977; Jeanperrin 1978). The publicity this topic has received in France has prompted a succession of inquiries. Their results indicate that in general the more education an individual receives, the less likely that he or she will be unemployed.

And, although the degradation of job possibilities is clearly perceptable over time, more education naturally leads to higher-level employment (Herzlich 1976; 1978). Thus, individuals still have an incentive to maximize their education, even though in an absolute sense the return on this investment is growing smaller.

Whether these increasing individual investments are desirable from a social point of view is another question. On this point sentiment has turned decisively against the university. Some feel that educating teachers and civil servants is not "productive," and hence that the expansion of higher education has contributed little to the French economy (Boudon 1977). Others accuse the universities of being "parking lots" where students mark time out of the labor market. The chief response of the government to this situation has been the inordinate stress on vocationalism already discussed in Part II. Yet, there are theoretical and practical doubts that can be raised about the relative productivity of narrowly focused professional training in the university.

The government has rather myopically focused its view of productivity on what Ronald Dore (1976) calls "cognitive investment." This refers to the very obvious situation in which knowledge is acquired through schooling in order to subsequently perform productive tasks. This process is easily visualized for the cases of medical doctors, engineers or teachers. However, the relationship between curriculum content and subsequent work become much more complicated for most other graduate careers. In fact, Dore makes it clear that, insofar as higher education is a productive investment, in most cases it must be substantially due to its capacity to create valuable mental abilities, mental attitudes and/or social attitudes. These would be the "process products as opposed to the end products of learning" (Dore

1976). It has always been the official view in France that it was the baccalauréat, not higher education, that certified the acquisition of these valued mental attributes. Today such a contention is certainly outdated, and probably little believed. The emphasis placed on purely cognitive investments is further undermined when the arguments of Lester Thurow (1975) are taken into account. He emphasizes that actual productive skills are learned for the most part on the job, and he perceives the role of education largely as an important factor determining an individual's relative place in the "labor queue" of those seeking employment.

The practical difficulties of finding appropriate vocations for which to groom students has been alluded to (p. 12), but considering the following recent degrees the limits of this process may have been reached in France: licence in biophysics applied to vegetable production (Angers); licence in teaching English to adults (Mulhouse); maîtrise in tourism (Chambéry, Nice & Orléans); maîtrise in protection of the environment (Paris VII); and, maîtrise in the conservation of art works (Paris I). It can hardly contribute to economic growth when a maîtrise in tourism replaces a bachelier aboard a tour bus, or when a highly specific degree title allows one graduate to beat out another for a job. Nor will unemployment be decreased. Unless university qualifications increase productivity on the job, thus justifying a wage premium, the result will simply be credential inflation. Vocational curricula, it would seem, can just as easily be unproductive as the old "irrelevant" material taught in academic disciplines. Possibly more so! Perhaps it is time for French educational planners to scrutinize the current dogma of vocationalism to determine under what conditions it will and will not yield the benefits that are blindly expected of it.

French planners might also consider the inputs to university education before they speak too loudly of wastefulness or lack of productivity. French

expenditures on higher education have historically compared poorly with other similar nations. In 1961 France ranked last among highly developed OECD countries in the percentage of G.N.P. devoted to higher education; in 1970 France was clearly last again with less than half of the average effort (OECD 1974). Since 1970 higher education's share of G.N.P. has declined considerably (Lévy-Garboua 1976). Real per-student expenditures have declined 20% from the plateau of 1965-70 (Lévy-Garboua 1976). An OECD study revealed that even in 1970 France was spending 25% more on each lycée student than it was on a student in the university (OECD 1977, p. 50). Direct comparisons with Belgium are particularly unflattering: in 1975 the French were spending $1,337 for each university student while the Belgians were expending $5,615--more than four times as much! (C.N.P.S. 1976; Secrétariat d'Etat aux Universités 1976).

Several conclusions might be drawn from this low level of support for higher education in France. A very small portion of these per-student expenditures are actually indexed to enrollments (unlike Belgium where per-student subsidies fund the entire regular budget of the universities). Therefore the marginal costs of accommodating more students in the university is extremely low--something one would never gather from government complaints about university waste. Given this situation, keeping students in the university is certainly cheaper than any form of unemployment compensation. But, perhaps the cost of the universities is too low. It is certainly possible that the parsimony of the government has been one of the principal causes of the pervasive devaluation of university study (cf. Lévy-Garboua 1976). One of the impossibilities of the second-cycle reform, for example, was the demand that the universities create new programs without new resources. It may well be, then, that the financial suffocation of the universities is

the chief obstacle to the government's own avowed policy of diversification. Moreover, at the moment there are a number of other factors favoring the success of this policy. University students in recent years have shown themselves to be highly mobile within the university and quite sensitive to the labor market outside of it (Lévy-Garboua 1977). These are both patterns that increase their likelihood of landing in programs that will be of most use to them in securing employment. Conditions thus seem to exist for the control of student demand through efficient market mechanisms. The problem for the future is to develop and enhance the valuation of the quality programs that emerge. It is doubtful if this can be accomplished without additional sums to reward and stimulate successful innovation; it is also doubtful if it can be accomplished within the context of the general devaluation of university studies. To date France has largely attempted to adapt its universities to the exigencies of mass higher education by using the stick of centrally imposed directives; perhaps it is time to try the carrot of institutional incentives.

The problems faced by Belgian higher education are considerably different. There the universities have been accused of "living too liberally, carried along by lavish budgets." Coming from the Minister of French Education such sentiments are rather ominous, and seem to indicate that the pall of austerity will not soon be lifted (Le Monde de l'éducation, Sept. 1977, p. 27). However, the quality of hostility existing toward universities in the Belgian government is rather different from that found in the French, and does not call into question the underlying value of university education. Nor is there any reason to do so. The generous funding that the government reluctantly provides seems to assure Belgian students a high quality education, including access to well-stocked

libraries and the personal attention of their professors. As has already been explained, the very quality of this education, or rather its inherent difficulty, has constituted a natural limit to university expansion. Belgium is consequently the only nation to attain mass higher education without any numerus clausus (excepting the faculties of applied sciences which, like French grandes écoles, have always admitted through competitive examination). Sentiment exists in Belgium both to make university admissions more restrictive and to grant wider and easier access. An important body of opinion also feels that social and economic changes as well as the adaptations made by other European countries "seem of necessity to impose important structural and conceptual transformations on Belgian post-secondary education" (Van de Vijvere 1977; cf. C.N.P.S. 1976). In the short-run, however, it is quite unlikely that any major reforms will be implemented. Recent experience makes it quite clear that major changes in Belgian higher education carry large price tags. And thus, the prevailing austerity virtually guarantees that the elite Belgian universities will continue to be anachronisms in the age of mass higher education--and comparatively speaking, rather successful anachronisms at that!

FOOTNOTES

[1] This is a slightly revised version of a paper prepared for A Conference of Europeanists sponsored by the Council for European Studies, March 29-31, 1979, Washington, D.C.

[2] Martin Trow has recently reevaluated his own model (1979), in part to account for discrepencies between the expected and the actual development of European higher education in the 1970s. He brings out the point, also crucial for this analysis, that although it is possible to use the terms "elite" and "mass" loosely to characterize evolutionary stages of the entire systems of higher education, the differentiation of functions requires that these terms be applied as well to sectors within systems.

[3] The desire to establish some form of selection in university study has been a ubiquitous undercurrent of government sentiment from the early sixties to the present. It would require a separate essay to do justice to this theme, however the salient points would include the following: the desire to establish selection upon credentials in 1966, which was only realized in the new IUTs; a serious effort to consider faculty entrance examinations before May 1963; the successful struggle to limit enrollments in medicine (1971); the largely unsuccessful attempt to make maîtrise programs selective in the second-cycle reform (1976); overcrowding in Parisien universities resulted in enrollment ceilings (1977), filled on a first-come basis (dubbed "selection by motorbike"); subsequently some Parisien universities have adopted the long-sought selection by academic qualifications; and finally, the proposed restructuring of the baccalauréat as envisioned in the Haby reforms which could reduce the number eligible for university study. Also see Lévy-Garboua (1977) for the growth of selective

sectors of higher education in France.

[4] The IUTs were intended to be more prestigious than the Sections de techniciens supérieurs, and eventually to supercede them (Van de Graaff 1976). In fact the two types have evenly divided short-cycle enrollments (see Statistical Appendix). Using an argument based upon game theory Boudon, Cibois and Lagneau (1975) have shown why short-cycle programs are unlikely to attract students from more prestigious, but vocationally more uncertain, full university programs. This case is buttressed considerably by the discussion of social recruitment in the universities in Part IV, below. The middle and upper-middle class students who predominate are least likely to accept the limited horizons offered by short-cycle programs.

[5] A recent study of the effects of open admissions in the City University of New York seems to reveal the same mechanism at work there as in France. In the authors' own words: "among the most educationally disenfranchised groups, Blacks and Hispanics, large proportions would not have been enrolled had it not been for open admissions . . . . While the open admissions policy was designed to bring about just such results, in so doing it also brought substantial benefits to whites, who, in fact, comprised the majority of open-admissions students." In addition, "white open-admissions students were better off, broadly speaking, than non-whites in grades, dropout and graduation rates, and the cumulative impact of these differences is much larger than any single one of them." David Lavin, Richard Alba & Richard Silberstein, "Open Admissions and Equal Access: a Study of Ethnic Groups in the City University of New York," Harvard Educational Review, 49, 1 (Feb. 1979), pp. 53-92; quotations from pp. 85-86.

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BELGIUM enrollment in 100s (a)	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
18-21 years	4530	4311	4136	4150	4319	4617	5046	5323	5561	5750
University Enrollments	268	278	293	313	337	363	403	458	500	551
% of age group (18-21)	5.9	6.4	7.1	7.5	7.8	7.9	8.	8.6	9	9.6
Non-Univ. Enrollments	183	193	208	231	274	298	324	345	370	410
Technical & artistic	111	115	115	125	161	183	218	248	287	334
Pedagogical (b)	72	78	93	106	113	115	106	97	83	76
% of age group	4	4.5	5	5.6	6.3	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.7	7.1
Total Enrollments	451	471	501	544	611	661	727	803	870	961
% of age group	9.9	10.9	12.1	13.1	13.9	14.4	14.4	15.1	15.7	16.7
18 years	1043	930	1012	1165	1212	1228	1441	1442	1450	1417
Secondary School Graduates (preceding academic year)	104	103	113	134	156	178	208	248*	250	273
Diploma for Univ. Study (c) (preceding academic year)								112	195	216
New Univ. Enrollments (Belgian only)	56	58	62	68	72	79	92	111	113	124
New Non-Univ. Enrollments	89	94	105	118	138	150	161	169	180	185*
Total New Enrollment	145	152	167	186	210	229	253	280	293	309
% 18 years	14	16	16.5	16	17	18.6	17.6	19.4	20.2	21.8

* estimated

BELGIUM -- continued

enrollment in 100s	1968-69	1969 -70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78
18-21 years	5729	5701	5704	5747	5817	5913	5987	6067	6137	6207
University Enrollments	605	655	704	765	783	795	808	832		
% of age group (18-21)	10.6	10.6	12.3	13.3	13.5	13.4	13.5	13.7		
Non-Univ. Enrollments	464	487	510	516	586	650	657	699		
Technical & artistic	396	425	444	436	481	525	529	577		
Pedagogical	68	62	66	80	105	125	128	122		
% of age group	8.1	8.5	8.9	9	10	11	11	11.5		
Total Enrollments	1069	1142	1214	1281	1369	1445	1465	1531		
% of age group	18.7	19.1	21.2	22.3	23.5	24.4	24.5	25.2		
18 years	1420	1414	1453	1460	1490	1510	1527	1540	1560	1580
Secondary School Graduates (preceding academic year)	286	283	287	301	313	329	332	346		
Diploma for Univ. Study (preceding academic year)	235	240	244	278	301	298	292	333		
New Univ. Enrollments (Belgian only)	132	142	152	160	162	163	165	164		
New Non-Univ. Enrollments	205*	233	221*	224*	255*	283*	287*	302*		
Total New Enrollment	337	375	373	384	417	446	452	466		
% 18 years	23.7	26.5	25.7	26.3	28	29.5	29.6	30.3		

*estimated

FRANCE enrollments in 100s (d)	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69
19-22 years	25253	23126	22537	21704	21435	21793	22688	23969	26681	29189	31731
University Enrollments (e)	1861	1948	2034	2326	2708	3082	3489	3937	4332	4779	5400 5861
Short-cycle Technical (STS & IUT)	n.a.	n.a.	70	89	91	115	140	175	270	341	395
Classes prép. aux Grandes Ecoles	193	218	210	219	246	257	248	267	259	283	311
Grandes Ecoles Total(f)	424	442	482	518	546	591	628	n.a.			573
Engineering	173	187	208	225	236	240	253				289
Others (g)	251	255	274	293	310	351	375				283
Total Higher Education	2478	2608	2796	3152	3591	4045	4505				7140
% 19-22 years	9.8	11.3	12.4	14.5	16.8	18.6	19.9				22.5
19 years	5752	5751	5261	4940	5483	6108	6155	6221	8195	8617	8698
Baccalauréats (A-E) (preceding year)	477	491	593	614	662	755	867	969	1058	1333	1694
Technical Bacc. (F-H) (preceding year)											
New University Enrol.			469				814		969	1160	1482
% 19 years			8.9				13.2		11.8	13.5	17.

* estimated n.a. not available

FRANCE enrollments in 100s	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	
19-22 years	34157	34601	34484	34302	33955	33660	33435	33182	33202		
University Enrollments	6017	6270	6641	6998	7041	7186	7628	7712	7842		
Short-cycle Technical (STS & IUT)	438	512	602	676	742	832	897	907	918		
Classes prép. aux Grandes Ecoles	324	326	316	328	337	338	352	368	372		
Grandes Ecoles Total	536	611	613	673		632	679	638			
Engineering	293	310*	322	352		331	360	364			
Others	244	301	292	321		301	319	274			
Total Higher Education	7315	7719	8172	8675	8755*	8988	9556	9625			
% 19-22 years	21.4	22.3	23.7	25.3	25.8	26.7	28.6	29.			
19 years	8647	8639	8500	8516	8300	8344	8275	8263	8320		
Baccalauréats (A-E) (preceding year)	1227	1387	1437	1474	1503	1534	1537		1526		
Technical Bacc. (F-H) (preceding year)	143	286	343	368	409	453	508		555		
New University Enrol.	1276	1441	1544	1601	1791	1826	1987	1952			
% 19 years	14.8	16.7	18.2	18.8	21.5	21.9	24.	23.6			

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

NOTES

(a) Sources: Annuaire statistique Belge; Annuaire statistique de l'enseignement, vols. 12 & 14; Bureau de statistiques universitaires, Rapports annuel. Also, Jose Van de Vijvere, "L'enseignement post-secondaire en Belgique: entre l'évolution et la mutation," Paedagogica Europaea, 1977, 1; and Jef Verhoeven, "The Belgian Universities under Crossfire: Linguistic Communalism, Bureaucratization and Democratization" in Hans Daalder, Ed. Legislatures and Universities, forthcoming.

(b) Ecoles normal moyen (2 yr.) and Ecoles normal technique moyen (1 yr.), both for teachers of 12-15 year age group. Primary school teachers were not trained in post-secondary institutions until after 1971; however, this change considerably inflated recruits to the écoles normal moyen after that date.

(c) The Diplôme d'aptitude d'accéder a l'enseignement supérieur was created in 1965. Prior to this only holders of a Certificat d'humanités were eligible for university study.

(d) Sources: Annuaire statistique de la France; Services des études informatiques et statistiques, Ministère de l'éducation, Statistiques des enseignements: tableaux et informations.

(e) Discontinuous series: 1958 to 1968 (upper number) represent students inscribed in the faculties--a restrictive definition of enrollments (however, see note f); 1968 (lower number) to 1977 are more inclusive figures conventionally used.

(f) Discontinuous series: totals for 1958 to 1964 include approx. 40% double enrollments with faculties. See note g.

(g) Due to severe irregularities in reported enrollments, totals for schools of beaux arts, languages and paramedicals have been eliminated from this category from 1968 on. This eliminates some but not all, of the double enrollments.

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